

# Celebrating the



*Young women  
around the world  
are coming closer  
to Jesus Christ  
through camp.*

**By Elaine S. Dalton**

Young Women general president

**T**his year we will celebrate a century of Young Women camp. Young Women camp was developed as a response to a need for summer work for the young women of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association (the name of the Young Women organization at the time).

## **Camp—A Favorite Activity**

Since 1912, many Young Women camps have been established and dedicated all around the world. A camp with the most basic and simple accommodations can become a sacred place where the Spirit of the Lord is present, where daughters of God put the principles of the gospel into practice, and the glorious blessings of nature are appreciated in happy ways.

All over the world, young women like yourselves are enjoying the experience of camping. In Africa, one of the first camps was held at a chapel where the young women slept on the grass and learned to cook on an electric stove. In other places, camp is held on the beach or in the jungle or in the mountains. Wherever camp is held, one thing is sure: young women love to go to camp! When asked about the favorite part of the Young Women experience in general, the majority of young women I have visited with say, "Camp!" Why is this a favorite? What happens at camp that makes this such a memorable experience?

Camp has always been a favorite activity because it is at camp that you can establish a mini home. Your tent becomes your home, and there you can gather all the essentials you need to be happy and comfortable and progressing. At camp you can discover that the Lord is great. He has provided this beautiful earth for us to enjoy and preserve. At camp, you learn that you really don't need much to be happy. You leave your makeup



and music behind and learn to become self-sufficient. You learn the importance of a strong, healthy body so you can climb mountains and swim in the ocean or in streams. You learn that the scriptures can speak to you very personally, and you also experience what it feels like to be still and to listen to the song of a bird or to the voice of the Spirit, sometimes for the first time.

### Your Camp Legacy

This year as we celebrate 100 years of Young Women camp, you may want to think of some things you can do so that other young women, perhaps your future daughters and granddaughters, will learn about what *you* did as a young woman to contribute to this grand legacy of camp.

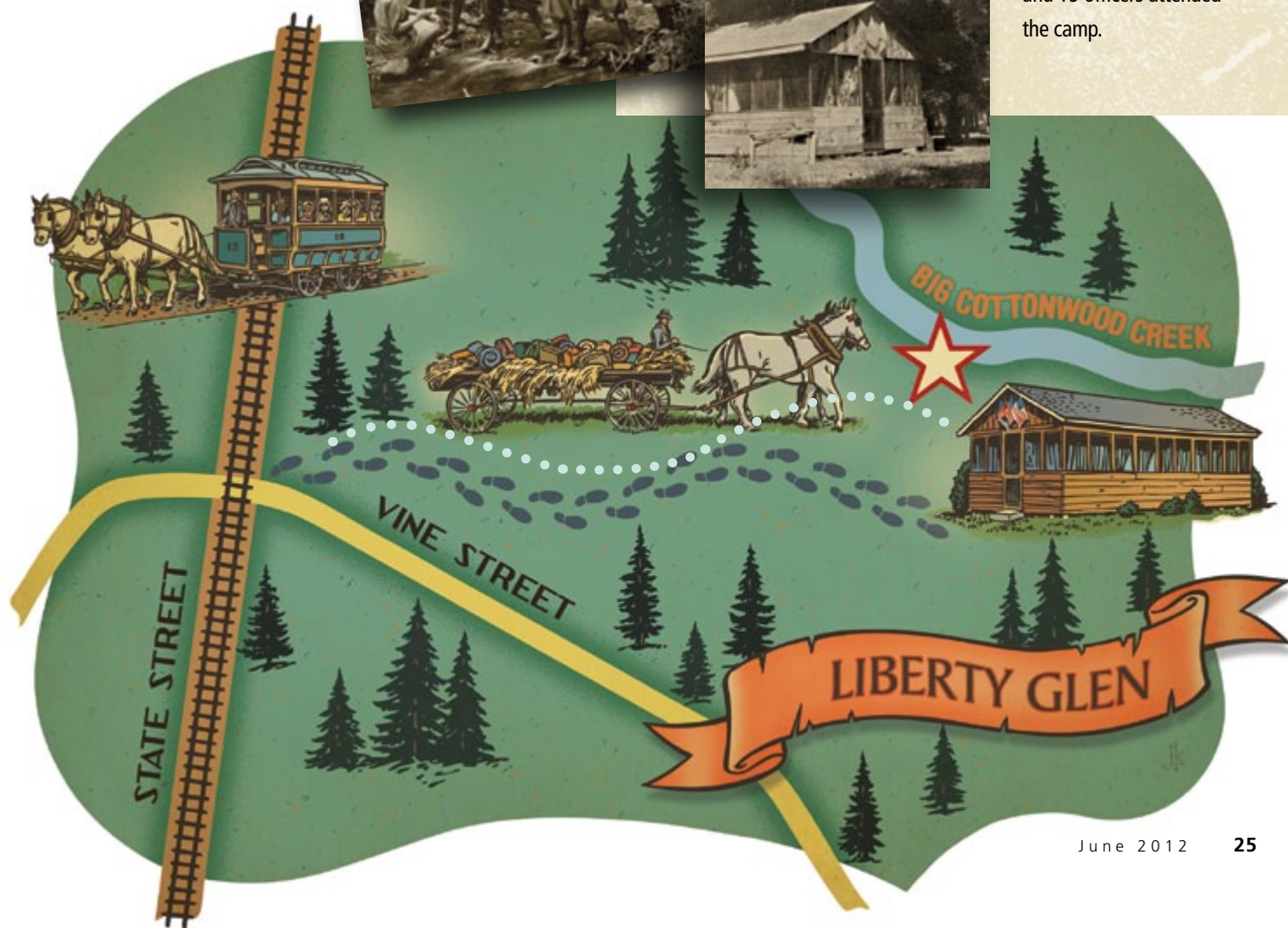
## THE FIRST YOUNG WOMEN CAMP

**I**n 1912, the Liberty Stake of Salt Lake City, Utah, planned and carried out the first recorded summer camp. The young ladies attended weekly meetings to plan, execute, and report their camp experiences. They engaged in fund-raising activities, including a campfire entertainment to advertise their project. The camp fee was 65 cents per girl! The young ladies tried out nutritious, well-balanced, easy-to-prepare menus in preparation for camp.

To get to the camp, the young ladies traveled south of Salt Lake City by streetcar to a location that is now in the town of Murray, Utah. Here they loaded their bags and bedding onto a wagon and then hiked a little over a mile to the banks of the Big Cottonwood Creek. The stream was widened and deepened in one place to allow for wading and swimming.

During the week, young ladies were taught about flowers, insects, birds, and plants. They cooked and ate in the open. They concluded the week with a hayrack ride and a night to entertain parents and ward friends who visited the camp.

During the summer of 1912, 82 young women and 15 officers attended the camp.





You may want to consider some of the following:

- Read the Book of Mormon and share your testimony of what you learned and felt in a special campfire meeting held during camp.
- Record 100 blessings you have received or felt while at camp.
- Perform 100 acts of service while at camp or in preparation to go to camp.
- Research 100 names to take to the temple in preparation for camp.
- Shine 100 lights from a high place at camp to represent your desire to stand for truth and righteousness and let the light of the Savior shine in your lives.
- Share 100 scriptures with the other young women at camp.
- Think of 100 ways you can bless your family when you return from camp.
- Compose a special song to celebrate camp in your area.
- Perform a skit showing what you think the first camp may have been like.
- Look in the scriptures for people who camped, and share their experiences.

You will think of more things you can do to celebrate this wonderful gift of Young Women camp. As you prepare to go to camp this year, may you always remember that each part of the Young Women experience is to help you grow in your faith and testimony of the Savior, understand your true identity as a daughter of God, and help you feel and recognize the Spirit's guidance in your life. As you participate in this wonderful opportunity and leave the world for a few short days to camp with your friends and your leaders in Young Women, we know you will learn and do things that will help you be prepared for the grand future that is yours, and you will desire to always be worthy to be in the temples and receive the blessings that are waiting for you. Have fun! And remember you are one of God's most precious creations! **NE**



Young Women camp in India

Young Women camp in Zimbabwe



#### More online

See several more articles celebrating the 100th anniversary of Young Women camp at [lds.org/go/YWcamp](http://lds.org/go/YWcamp).



## FIRST YOUNG WOMEN CAMP IN MONGOLIA

By Mary N. Cook

First counselor in the Young Women general presidency

### Young Women camp in Mongolia

The first Young Women camps in Mongolia were some of the most memorable experiences of my life. While serving a mission, my husband and I assisted the newly baptized leaders and young women. We had just one branch in Mongolia, and most of the people had been members less than one year. Acting as an adviser to the Young Women leaders, I knew camp would be a wonderful way for young women to recognize God's love for them and appreciate His wonderful creations.

Quoting from my August 15, 1995, journal entry:

"Last week we went camping with the young women. It was fun . . . wet, but fun. It had rained the entire week before we left on Friday. That morning it was clear and warm, and we were excited to go. We got four small tents from the Boy Scouts here, and the girls brought two other tents. We had forty-three girls show up, seven leaders, and one other missionary couple.

"Overall, the camp was great. As soon as we pitched our tents, torrential rains came down on us. The Scout tents were less than ideal, and water drenched the heavy woolen blankets and clothes. We had to put 8–9 girls in 4-man tents. They didn't seem to mind. They went hiking, picked baby strawberries by the handful, peeled potatoes in the creek . . . all in the rain. We didn't hear a complaint.

"Friday night, we studied the Book of Mormon by candlelight. It was a great experience. The leaders led a discussion that would have gone on for hours if we hadn't sent them to bed. They went to their wet tents and conducted testimony meetings. They loved every aspect of the evening. Everything is so new to these people. They have so few opportunities, and it is ever so rewarding to provide some worthwhile opportunities for them to learn and grow. I'm sure we have started a tradition of girls' camp in Mongolia."

The Church in Mongolia was in its infancy. They had no scriptures translated into Mongolian, no camp manual, nor even hymns in Mongolian. But for two days in the Mongolian steppe, they enjoyed God's creations, studied the gospel together, became more united, and felt the Spirit as they shared their testimonies of their newfound religion. *NE*